

January 30, 1996

Dear Mayor Wong and City Councilmembers:

It is with confidence and anticipation that we present you with our "Final Report: Task Force on Homelessness in Mesa." The past ten months have been difficult, eye-opening, and humbling. But we have come away with renewed faith that many homeless people, given just enough of the *right kind* of help from a compassionate community, can successfully reinvent their lives.

In our report, we have recommended policies and actions that we believe constitute the 'right kind of help' to stymie the proliferation in Mesa of homeless people who are unwilling to address their problems. For those who ARE willing, we have proposed a continuum of interconnected, comprehensive policies, programs and services which will expedite their journey from the streets to self-sufficiency (at the highest level of which they are capable). After hearing extensively from the citizens of our community, we are convinced that this approach will be supported by the public, by the social services community, and by those homeless people who truly seek a better way of life.

Our service on this Task Force has taught us new respect for the community decision-making process, for each others' very diverse viewpoints, and for the magnitude of the problem we were assigned to study. While we acknowledge that no easy solution to the problem of homelessness in Mesa exists, we know that we DO have a choice of community attitude and policy regarding it. While we know that our recommendations will not wholly eliminate this problem, we believe they will narrow its negative impact while broadening our potential for success with those who truly want help.

The work we have done here is current, relevant, creative and, we believe, implementable -- though it will take courage and perseverance to do so. Because of the enormous scope of our task, we were unable to take these conclusions and recommendations to the public for review and comment prior to our submission of this report. We stand ready, if City Council so desires, to conduct those public input sessions and to assist in any other way we can in the implementation and ongoing fine-tuning of these recommendations.

Thank you for this extraordinary opportunity to serve our community.

Respectfully submitted,

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We accord special recognition to the following members of the Task Force, who were unable to complete their service, but who contributed materially to the Report and/or Recommendations submitted to City Council.

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FINAL REPORT

TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS IN MESA

Introduction

When the Task Force on Homelessness in Mesa began its work on March 23, 1995, our assignment was to find the best solution possible to the escalating, troubling problem of homelessness in our community. Although there surely is no simple, single solution to this complex challenge, we believe we have made a good start. During the ten months of our service, the Task Force heard more than 20 hours of testimony from virtually every segment of the Mesa community touched by this social dilemma -- from human services providers, to police and fire officials, to legal experts, to shelter operators, to government leaders, to neighborhood representatives, to business people, to homeless program administrators in other states and cities. . . to homeless people themselves.

What became clear, after all of the study, research, hearings and deliberating were done, is that Mesa is unquestionably a community of compassionate, caring people. What also became clear is that it is a community with high expectations and personal standards -- a community which is more than willing to extend a generous helping hand, but which expects those who take it to reciprocate by striving diligently to overcome their problems and resume self-reliant citizenship to the best of their ability. **None** of the citizens we interviewed, including homeless and formerly homeless individuals, thought that homelessness should be allowed to proliferate unaddressed and unchecked in our community. Virtually all of them believed that significant success in preventing this would come through strong, clearly-articulated and enforced community/ public policies; carefully-designed, cooperative, fully-integrated programs and services; and consistent, firm insistence on accountability for service recipients and service providers. The conclusions and recommended actions in this report reflect that message.

Initial Recommendation

After absorbing testimony from members of the community and reviewing Mesa's past and present actions, it became clear to us that single-shot solutions to this challenge, however well-intentioned, have been and will continue to be only partially effective, and only for a limited time. What is needed to truly address the situation is an **integrated system** which assists willing homeless individuals to achieve the highest level of independence of which they are capable, and which discourages the presence in Mesa of those unwilling to try to solve their own problems to the best of their abilities, whatever that may be.

Accordingly, the Task Force's first conclusion and recommended action is to request that the City Council consider the proposals contained herein as a **total package**, for

they support each other, create the integrated system mentioned above, and require wholesale implementation in order to produce the desired results.

The conclusions we came to, and the actions we are recommending, are designed to support the community's policies and philosophy for addressing homelessness in Mesa as proposed in Conclusion/Recommended Action 1 of this report. We are keenly aware of the fact that **there is no one action that will provide the whole solution to this problem**. Further, it is critical that the continuum of care of services as outlined here -- and in particular, adequate shelter -- **be in place before more stringent measures such as denying services for non-participation are implemented**. It needs to be clearly understood that it takes time to build a continuum of care and that services now available to those on the street must not just arbitrarily be taken away once the beginnings of the continuum are in place. Providing comprehensive services and empowerment to those homeless persons who are willing to work on their problems will require phased development and implementation of policies, facilities and services such as we have proposed here.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. CONCLUSION: THE CITY MUST TAKE A STRONG POLICY STAND TO ELIMINATE HOMELESSNESS AS A VIABLE WAY OF LIFE IN MESA.

Recommended Actions

It is important that the City take a strong policy stand in order to put all other recommended actions in a proper context. The Task Force believes Mesa should adopt a community policy regarding homelessness first, and then determine what services best fit the implementation of that policy, rather than simply throwing new services at the problem. Further, as new services are proposed, it should always first be determined if they fit within the scope of the adopted community policy on homelessness, and those that don't should not be implemented.

*As a general policy statement, then, the community of Mesa desires to determine which homeless people are willing to try to help themselves, and offer services to them leading to self-sufficiency or appropriate quasi-independent or assisted living, in keeping with their individual levels of capability. It is further proposed that Mesa's policy be **NOT** to serve -- and to actively encourage to leave Mesa -- those homeless people who are not willing to try to help themselves. In support of those general statements, the following corollaries are proposed:*

1] Abandon Mesa's current "middle of the road" policy. Work to eradicate the attitude (among social services agencies and the public) of "don't expect anything of

them, they're homeless". Advice from a homeless person who testified before the Task Force: "Make it tougher on us; then we have to pick ourselves up."

2] Our community's goal is to eliminate homelessness as a viable, comfortable way of life in Mesa. This means that homeless people have to participate in some kind of plan to help themselves; they **must** enter a program whose goal is to help them get off the streets, or they are not welcome in Mesa at all.

2. CONCLUSION: THE COMMUNITY AND HOMELESS PEOPLE EACH HAVE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES IN ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS IN MESA.

Recommended Actions

The Task Force recommends adoption of the specific responsibilities enumerated below, as part of the City's clarification and solidification of its policy regarding homelessness in Mesa.

A. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMUNITY

1] Provide resources to assist, enable, empower homeless people to help themselves to the degree that they are able.

2] Let homeless people be involved in the process of making the rules and regulations which are designed to govern their behavior.

3] Strictly enforce rules and regulations; require that homeless people demonstrate a willingness to follow the rules and help themselves.

4] Provide a clear definition of what is proper behavior (ie., the same rules all citizens have to follow).

5] Those who can't (mentally, physically) help themselves -- give them more chances, continue to nudge them to follow through on what they CAN do (to the limits of their capabilities).

6] Create a continuum of care of services that can be accessed by homeless people. Ensure that any facilities or services provided to them fit within that continuum.

7] Provide accountable, safe facilities for homeless people and others.

8] Provide opportunities for homeless people to give something back to the community.

9] Advocate with other levels of government to get services and laws needed in the community to provide a continuum of care leading to self-sufficiency.

10] Use our resources for homeless people effectively all year round.

11] Become educated about homeless people and about what is really helpful to them.

B. RESPONSIBILITY OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

1] Homeless people in Mesa are expected to actively do all that they can (appropriate to their capabilities) to help themselves become self-reliant, responsible members of the community.

2] Those who truly **can't** help themselves must follow through (to the extent they are capable of doing so) when help is given to them; those who **won't** help themselves should have services discontinued until/unless they are willing to help themselves.

3] Homeless people must give something (service) back to the community to receive something (services).

4] Homeless people have a responsibility not to endanger themselves or others.

5] Homeless people must follow social rules/laws of the community, the same as anyone else: ie., no abusive or obscene language; use proper facilities for bodily functions; properly use public facilities/areas (parks, playgrounds, restaurants, businesses); no panhandling; no indecent behavior in public (sex, exposure); exhibit respect for other people's business and residential property.

6] Care for and treat children properly (ie., they should get appropriate immunizations; they are not to be used as 'bait' by panhandlers; they should be attending school, they should be getting needed medical care).

7] Homeless people should police themselves and their behavior as much as possible.

3. **CONCLUSION: ONLY SERVICES PROVIDED WITHIN A CONTINUUM OF CARE WHICH INCLUDES SHELTER SHOULD BE OFFERED FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE TO ADDRESS THEIR PROBLEMS AND WORK TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY (OR APPROPRIATE QUASI-INDEPENDENT OR ASSISTED LIVING, IN KEEPING WITH THEIR CAPABILITIES). INCENTIVES AND SERVICES OUTSIDE OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE THAT MAKE IT EASY FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE TO STAY ON THE STREETS SHOULD BE REDIRECTED OR ELIMINATED.**

Recommended Actions

The "continuum of care" concept is not a new one in health and human services arenas generally; we believe it also can be applied effectively in the area of homelessness. It can be used as a tool to make -- and sustain -- productive contact with those homeless people for whom 'help' usually means a handout rather than a hand up. The Task Force recognizes that no one entity controls all of the services offered in the community for homeless people, so this change in philosophy will have to be developed over time on a voluntary basis, as the success of an integrated system is realized.

A. INCENTIVES/SERVICES TO HELP HOMELESS PEOPLE REACH SELF-SUFFICIENCY (OR THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF WHICH THEY ARE CAPABLE):

1] Create an outreach team to: identify homeless people on our streets; respond to and deal with community problems related to/created by homelessness; coordinate with all entities to offer appropriate information and services to homeless individuals; and explain options to homeless people. 'Explanation' will include this progression: first, information about and multiple (if necessary) requests that they avail themselves of assistance and services available through the continuum of care; second, strong encouragement to do so; third, if they are as yet unwilling to participate in accordance with community policy and with their own capabilities to do so, they will be invited to relocate, as even basic services will not be available to them.

2] Working with each homeless person who enters the Mesa continuum of care, create a mutually-constructed and agreed-upon individual case plan which details the actions, services, assistance, improvements and outcomes which are desirable and realistically possible given each person's own capacities and capabilities for achieving self-sufficiency. Among the initial, basic services that might be offered in a typical situation are (but are not limited to):

- a. intake and assessment
- b. case management
- c. shelter year round, 24 hours per day

- d. meals (only in conjunction with other continuum of care services for clients working towards self-sufficiency)
- e. transportation to/from facilities
- f. opportunity to develop job skills to get back into the workforce
- g. telephone, voice mail, and mailing address (P.O. Box)
- h. showers and toilets
- i. laundry
- j. storage for personal possessions
- k. haircuts
- l. clothes for a job
- m. bus fare/transportation
- n. basic dental and medical care
- o. counseling services

3] Strive, through case management, to bring a homeless person and his/her family back together again whenever appropriate and possible.

B. DISINCENTIVES TO DISCOURAGE HOMELESS PERSONS FROM STAYING ON THE STREETS:

1] When the continuum of care is adequately in place, the following items and services would not be provided outside of that continuum, because they would make it more comfortable for homeless people to remain on the streets instead of seeking assistance:

- a. blankets
- b. public restrooms (those which might be provided specifically for homeless persons, not those already in place for general public use)
- c. cardboard boxes
- d. food boxes or food service (not connected with shelter)
- e. a place to receive mail/phone calls (incoming or outgoing)
- f. showers (specifically provided for homeless persons)
- g. personal hygiene products
- h. a temporary winter shelter

2] The Task Force has done considerable review of regulations and laws related to the distribution by homeless people of publications ("The Grapevine," now called "The Viewpoint," is one example) on City streets. We have found both City ordinances and State statutes inadequate to deal with this form of panhandling, as there are First Amendment/Constitutional issues involved. Nevertheless, we are hearing that other communities also are grappling with this and other panhandling problems, and are pioneering new legal approaches to try to eradicate them. Accordingly, we recommend that:

- a. Pursuant to A.R.S. 13-2906, the Police Department strictly monitor the distribution of publications from traffic medians in the middle of arterial streets, from sidewalks at the corners of busy intersections, at the entrances to freeway ramps, etc., and halt it if it begins to constitute a significant public safety hazard as defined in the Statute cited.
- b. Use the marketing and education program outlined in Recommendation #6 to encourage citizens to reject panhandling in all of its forms, and to offer instead assistance which will tie homeless people into the continuum of care and truly aid them in getting off the streets.
- c. The proposed Homeless Coordinator and the proposed multidisciplinary committee be given responsibility to continue active research into panhandling, use by panhandlers of children (under age 18) as shills to get sympathy and assistance, and other homelessness-related laws in other communities around the U.S. (in cooperation with the Mesa City Attorney/Police Department legal staff) and take from them such proposals as are deemed workable here in Mesa, for proposal at the local or State level, as appropriate.

3] It appears that there are adequate laws in the Arizona Revised Statutes and in the City of Mesa Code to address such issues as trespassing (A.R.S. 13-1502 through 1504), and public nuisance (A.R.S. 13-2917, 13-2908). The Task Force recommends that these laws be enforced to the fullest extent possible and practicable.

- a. Where the issue is availability of police officers to do enforcement in a given geographic area, consider educating and empowering citizens to patrol their own neighborhoods and keep police advised of violations and identities of possible perpetrators (the Lehi "Citizens on Patrol" program is an example of this).

According to testimony the Task Force heard, interpretation of the aforementioned statutes by both the Police Department and by the courts makes these laws less enforceable than they might appear at first reading. It is recommended that wherever strengthening of these laws appears possible, that the City Attorney/Police Department legal staff be requested to review them and that the Homeless Coordinator take the lead in working to change them.

4] Persistent, consistent police encouragement to keep moving is a deterrent for homeless people; jail is not. Police should apply the same community standard of behavior to homeless people that is expected of people with homes. Those homeless people not interested in working towards the highest level of self-sufficiency of which they are capable should, within the bounds of the law, be encouraged to relocate. All laws relating to unacceptable public behavior should be strictly enforced.

4. CONCLUSION: A YEAR-ROUND, 24-HOUR SHELTER WITH APPROPRIATE SERVICES IS NEEDED IN MESA. THIS WILL FILL A SIGNIFICANT GAP IN THE OVERALL MESA HUMAN SERVICES CONTINUUM OF CARE. (see attached chart)

Recommended Actions

Without safe, clean, dependable shelter -- with basic needs services attached to it in some way (food, clothing, hygiene facilities/supplies) -- it is virtually impossible for a homeless person to begin doing the things he/she needs to do to escape homelessness. Homelessness most often is a 'survival' condition in which most of a person's energies are devoted to staying alive on streets that are sometimes hostile, in weather (summer and winter) which is sometimes life-threatening (for a person in a weakened physical condition). It is difficult to require a homeless person to look for a job or deal with a substance abuse or mental health problem while he/she is in survival mode. We therefore propose:

1] As a first priority, create a permanent, year-round shelter for single men and/or women with a maximum capacity of 75 clients (a shelter housing more than 75 single clients becomes too difficult to manage). When that initial shelter is consistently housing 80% of its capacity, begin the planning process to create a second shelter (and so on).

2] As a second priority, expand the system wide bed capacity for emergency shelter for families.

3] Currently, there is not enough shelter capacity for homeless families, however, there is **NO** permanent, year-round shelter space available for homeless singles, the most visible segment of the homeless population. It is intended that the needs of both groups be met. Money currently allocated to services for either category of homeless persons should not be simply diverted to serve the other group; funds for expanded/additional services should be added to the total amount available, as necessary.

4] Any shelter facility should include, but is not limited to, the following operating provisions to make the program the most effective for the client and the least intrusive on neighbors:

- a. Require a contract with the homeless client that describes the expectations of the program and requires a commitment from the client.
- b. Keep an immaculate building exterior; have the clients clean up around the shelter.
- c. The shelter must be alcohol and drug-free.
- d. Clients must be working with a case manager and making progress on a case plan to stay at the shelter.
- e. The length of time a client can stay at the shelter should be limited.
- f. Provide transportation to and from the shelter facility from a variety of sites in the community (depending on what services the homeless clients are availing themselves of) to minimize the impact on the neighborhood. No walk-ins to the shelter will be permitted.
- g. Provide a few beds where those working nights can sleep during the day and a few beds for clients who are sick.
- h. Create an Advisory Board to oversee shelter operations that includes neighborhood residents and businesses, as well as shelter staff, shelter residents and volunteers.
- i. Use the proposed homeless outreach team to respond to problems in a timely way. Stress to the community that problems with homeless people must be reported right away.
- j. Basic services such as shower, laundry, storage, meals, and clothing should be provided at the shelter, only for those clients admitted to the shelter. Other services (ie., job search, addiction or mental health counseling, medical services, case management) should be provided away from the shelter facility.

5. **CONCLUSION: THE EXISTING PROCESS FOR SITING SOCIAL SERVICE FACILITIES IN MESA DOES NOT GIVE PROVIDER AGENCIES ENOUGH GUIDANCE ABOUT WHAT ZONES TO LOOK IN FOR POSSIBLE SITES, NOR DOES IT PROVIDE ENOUGH OPPORTUNITY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS AND PROVIDER AGENCIES TO DISCUSS ISSUES AND SOLVE PROBLEMS BEFORE BRINGING APPLICATIONS TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL.**

Recommended Actions

The opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment to the Zoning Code for licensing of social services facilities really helped the Task Force to clarify its thinking in this difficult area. The group concluded generally that social services MUST have a way to locate SOMEWHERE in our community, and City government must offer guidance to social services providers about how to do that successfully. At the same time, the Task Force concurred with the residential and business neighbors of such facilities that they, too, should have a voice -- early in the process -- about siting, method of operation, safeguards, and other details. The recommendations we have made here suggest modifications to the existing Council Use Permit process and reject the proposed amendments to the Zoning Code.

1] The proposed amendment to the Zoning Code for licensing of social services facilities as a 'use by right' in certain zones should **not** be adopted.

2] The existing Council Use Permit should be retained in its entirety, but should have the following new elements/modifications added to it:

a. The separations proposed in the Zoning Code amendment, as follows:

1) "A social service facility shall not be located within three hundred (300) feet of: a church; or a public or private elementary or secondary school; or a public or private day care center, preschool, nursery, kindergarten, or similar use; or a boundary of a single residence district as specified in the Zoning ordinance and depicted on the City of Mesa Zoning Map; or a public park; or an establishment having an Arizona Spirituous Liquor License.

2) A social service facility shall not be established, operated, substantially enlarged or experience a transfer of ownership or control within one thousand (1,000) feet of another social service facility."

3) The Council, at its discretion, may increase these separation requirements further if it deems that action appropriate to the circumstances.

4) " The City Council may, in its discretion, grant an exemption from these separation requirements if it determines:

a) That the location of the proposed social service facility at a lesser distance will not have a detrimental effect on nearby properties (in some cases because of significant intervening physical or operational buffering or mitigating features), or be contrary to the public safety or welfare; and

b) That the granting of the exemption will not violate the spirit and intent of the Council Use Permit and Social Services Facilities Guidelines; and

c) That the proposed exemption is necessary to adequately serve the public in need of the specified social service; and

d) That there are no feasible or reasonable alternative locations for a proposed social services facility that would comply with these separation requirements; and

e) That all other applicable provisions of the Council Use Permit, Social Services Facilities Guidelines and the Mesa City Code will be observed."

b. Adoption by the City Council of a 'scattered site' policy for social service facilities, which means that the Council, in considering a proposed location for a social service facility, shall take into account the locations of other such facilities in the area so as to avoid a "clustering" effect in any given section of the community.

c. A provision requiring a prospective social services facility developer "(applicant", hereafter) to initiate meetings and seek consensus with the neighborhood(s) affected by his/her project at the same time that he/she applies for a City C.U.P., but BEFORE he/she comes before the Planning and Zoning Board, Town Center Board or City Council for a formal public hearing and action. The applicant will be required to document that this process has taken place and what results were achieved.

The intent of this provision is to involve neighborhoods in discussion and formulation of plans for social services facilities from the very beginning of the project, rather than waiting for the applicant and neighbors to have their first contact in the form of an adversarial confrontation before a public body.

It is hoped that in a majority of cases, a prospective developer/applicant and a neighborhood will be able to resolve their major concerns together before coming to the City to begin the formal approval process. City staff may be asked to attend neighborhood meetings with the applicant to answer questions about City regulations and approval processes. If consensus is not reached, staff may suggest facilitation/mediation to try to reach resolution. If that ultimately does not occur, the applicant may choose to seek alternative sites where his/her proposed use may be more compatible, or he/she may proceed with the formal approval process.

It should be noted that while preliminary discussion between neighbors and a prospective developer/applicant is required, nothing in that requirement *forces* them to come to consensus; they still may choose to come before a deliberating body in an adversarial mode. However, it is anticipated that prior achievement of consensus will be given considerable positive weight by the various deliberating bodies as the application moves through the formal City approval process, whereas an application still in conflict may be referred back to the adversarial parties for further mediation and discussion prior to formal action being taken.

- c. An expansion of the area around the proposed site of a social services facility which is to be notified by the developer/applicant in writing, by mail, of the application for a C.U.P., from the typical three hundred (300) feet to a minimum of one thousand (1,000) feet.

1) An additional 'sphere of potential influence' area outside of the minimum one thousand (1,000)-foot formal notification area may be designated by Planning and Zoning staff after their initial review of the applicant's proposal (submitted in accordance with the C.U.P. process). This might include school boundaries, natural neighborhood boundaries, market areas of businesses, Building a Healthy Mesa or community school boundaries, presence of public facilities in the area and other similar factors. The developer/applicant will be permitted to use informal notification methods such as neighborhood or organization newsletters, door hangers, telephone calls to identified leaders, flyers, etc., to notify those within this 'sphere of potential influence' of proposed development plans and of meetings to be held to discuss those plans. The developer/

applicant must thoroughly and accurately document methods used to achieve this informal notification as part of the application process.

- d. The definition of "social services facility" contained in the proposed Zoning Code amendment.

- 1) Halfway houses should be added to that definition.

3] The City Council should adopt and include prominently in the C.U.P. ordinance a policy statement which indicates that it is the City's preference that social services facilities be located generally in the C-3, M-1 and M-2 zones.

- a. The intent of this policy is to balance protection of neighborhoods with a reasonable process for locating necessary social services facilities *somewhere* in our community. By designating the three zones named above, the Council will give prospective applicants guidance as to the areas of Mesa where development of social services facilities may be the most compatible and acceptable.
- b. It should be made clear in this policy that the application process and need for a C.U.P. **remain the same** for applicants in these designated areas; however, preference will be given to applications in those zones as contrasted with applications for such facilities in other zones.

4] The City Council should regularly adopt (as it has done previously), for each Council Use Permit issued for a social service facility, reasonable review intervals for that Permit. This would require the permittee to be examined as to performance or non-performance of the provisions and conditions contained therein, to establish new conditions for continuation of its service if warranted, and to reaffirm the Permit in general.

- a. Council should require in the Permit (as it has done previously) that a facility's management meet at regular intervals with its neighbors, to discuss/resolve any problems and exchange information.

6. CONCLUSION: A MASSIVE, ON-GOING EDUCATION EFFORT IS NEEDED FOR THE PUBLIC, PROVIDER AGENCIES (INCLUDING RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS), BUSINESSES, AND THE HOMELESS POPULATION ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF HOMELESSNESS. EXPECTATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND ACTIONS THAT ARE AND ARE NOT HELPFUL IN SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY'S STATED POLICY AND GOALS REGARDING HOMELESSNESS, SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED.

Recommended Actions

The key to cooperative efforts of any kind is communication. The Task Force believes that in order to make a comprehensive approach to a community problem viable, the entire community must comprehend, and the majority of residents embrace the articulated policy on that problem. Thus, if it is going to be Mesa's policy to provide services to homeless people who are willing to work on their problems, and to deny services to those unwilling to do so, this policy must be communicated on every level, fine-tuned until there is community consensus on it, and then marketed regularly to sustain community awareness of it. That is what is recommended here.

1] Make the services for homeless people so visible and accessible that everyone will know where to send homeless people for help.

2] Educate and work closely with the Police and Fire Departments regarding services which are available to homeless people, and regarding the conditions under which such services will be rendered. Discuss with them the Mesa accountability standard, which requires reasonable, consistent progress towards case plan goals, and which disenfranchises (ie., denies services of all kinds to) homeless people who continue to choose non-participation or disruptive behavior after an alternative has been offered. Develop working relationships among the Police, City Court and mental health providers (COMCARE is an example) so that appropriate action can be taken when dealing with a seriously mentally ill homeless person.

3] Create and implement an ongoing marketing program emphasizing that solving the problem of homelessness is a partnership that includes government, the public, businesses, religious organizations, provider agencies and representatives of the homeless population. Tailor the message delivered to the needs and interests of each group being targeted. A marketing program should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Educate the homeless population about the standards of behavior expected of them in our community by using service providers to talk to homeless people when interacting with them, and by drawing on homeless people themselves as a network to spread the word.
- b. Educate the public about types of giving that really help and how panhandling makes the problem of homelessness worse instead of better. Create for the public something else to give homeless people besides money. (Philadelphia created a program called the "Campaign for Real

Change" to discourage the public from giving money to panhandlers, using the slogan "The more you give change, the more things will stay the same." Wallet-size cards referring panhandlers to social service agencies are readily available to the public at local businesses and people are encouraged to give these cards instead of "spare change." Information is also made available about where donations can be sent that will be used for services for the homeless population.)

- c. Work with the business community to create the concept of "a community-conscious business" which includes donating to services within the continuum of care instead of giving to homeless people at the door.
- d. Work with religious organizations to create more effective ways for them to contribute to the continuum of care of services used by homeless people. Invite them to join with other service providers in the community to help solve the problem of homelessness in an integrated and helpful manner. With the help of religious organizations and others, create a 'big picture' philosophy, shared vision, and list of principles for helping end homelessness in our community that will serve as a mission statement for all those involved in the care of homeless people.
- e. Work with the public, the religious organizations and the provider agencies to overcome the 'holiday-helper' syndrome, which creates an outpouring of caring and assistance for homeless people during the Thanksgiving-to-Christmas season, then leaves them scrambling for resources the remainder of the year. Encourage systematic community fund-raising/giving (similar to United Way or YMCA campaigns) throughout the year to support programs, which will assist homeless persons to get off the streets permanently (instead of just making them comfortable for a few days each winter).

4] Establish information distribution networks and continually use them; ie., neighborhood meetings, Block Watch, cable channels, news media, utility bill messages, "Mesa Matters", and Building a Healthy Mesa programs/activities/publications.

5] Invite religious organizations to adopt individuals and families for whom they will provide modeling, mentoring and support (like Lutheran Social Ministries, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, AA, etc). Encourage fraternal organizations, civic groups, neighborhood associations, service clubs, etc., to become involved in a similar way.

7. CONCLUSION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY, ON-GOING, COORDINATED RESPONSE IS NEEDED TO MANAGE THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

Recommended Actions

Without question, the task of creating a plan to deal in a positive manner with homelessness in Mesa is a dynamic one. The Task Force believes its recommendations in this report constitute a good start, but also cautions that it is only that -- a beginning. Thus, it is proposed that on-going management of this problem is needed, as follows:

1] Create a multidisciplinary committee (similar to the Gang Prevention Steering Committee) to manage the issue. Include Police, Fire/medical, social services, religious organizations, homeless representatives, a mental health provider agency representative, schools, Courts, and neighborhood and business groups. Use this committee to monitor the effectiveness of existing programs; to create, implement, and monitor a community plan for continuing to work towards ending homelessness; and to advocate and mediate for solutions to on-going problems related to homelessness (ie. continued development of the continuum of care, affordable housing, dealing with homeless minors, mandatory State licensing of halfway houses, the effects of federal funding cuts/block granting on homeless services, funding/implementation of homelessness prevention services, etc.).

2] Use a computer database for tracking homeless clients (possibly Mesa Emergency Services Network). All homeless persons who present themselves for services must initially establish their identities for the database. Through this system, it will be possible to pinpoint and follow the progress of individuals who are seeking or who have previously sought assistance -- a theme the Task Force heard repeatedly from citizens, who felt individuals should identify themselves and be held accountable for their actions once help is received in any form. If a client chooses not to adhere to the case plan or other behavioral agreement he/she has made with a case management agency, the database can be used to notify all providers of that client's choice and of the consequences attached thereto. The ultimate goal is to have all providers agree not to serve clients who choose not to be accountable for their progress towards the highest level of self-sufficiency of which they are capable. It should be noted, however, that because of the great diversity of ability and (mental/physical/emotional) condition among homeless people, provider agencies must retain the flexibility to follow the spirit as well as the letter of the law in enforcing the denial-of-services consequence on non-

responsive clients. The key to the success of this tough-but-fair policy is mutual communication and cooperation among the helping agencies, whether they be public, private or not-for-profit, so that all can conserve limited resources and use them to assist those homeless people who are willing to be accountable. Although association among the agencies will be voluntary, it behooves the City or whatever entity is coordinating services to homeless people to encourage regular inter-agency 'staffings' on difficult clients to resolve misperceptions and to focus on the goal of helping all those who truly wish to be helped.

3] Create a Homeless Coordinator City staff position to act as a point person on homeless issues in Mesa.

4] One of the biggest difficulties in working with seriously mentally ill homeless people is finding and maintaining contact with these individuals for a long enough period of time to help them secure appropriate assistance and services. It is therefore critical to establish a mental health outreach worker/case manager as a member of the shelter staff team, regardless of whether this position is funded by COMCARE or some other source.

8. CONCLUSION: THE CREATION AND OPERATION OF A YEAR- ROUND HOMELESS SHELTER SHOULD BE A JOINT EFFORT OF EAST VALLEY CITIES, SINCE THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS EXTENDS BEYOND THE BORDERS OF MESA.

Recommended Actions

As the largest City in the East Valley, Mesa is in a position to take the lead on complex, cross-boundary issues like homelessness -- but it should not have to address these issues alone. Mesa expects cooperation and assistance from all East Valley jurisdictions, and from federal, state and county sources as well. That expectation forms the basis for this recommendation:

1] The precedent for multi-jurisdictional cooperation/funding for sub-regional homeless shelters was established with FESC, and should be continued and expanded. Mesa is willing to be the political leader and organizer again to establish a site, a program and provider agency and organize funding; however, Mesa expects substantial participation from other East Valley communities, including funding assistance, possible sites for shelters or other services, volunteers to help staff facilities, and assistance in securing corporate grants from businesses located in those other cities and towns.

2] In pursuing a multi-jurisdictional approach, it should be emphasized that ALL of the following own a portion of the opportunity/responsibility to assist financially in the implementation of these Recommendations: adjacent municipalities (especially those without existing facilities or services for homeless people); the corporate and small-

business residents of our City and the other cities and towns; the Federal, State and County governments; the Mesa and Valley of the Sun United Ways; private non-profit social services provider agencies; private foundations; religious organizations; and private citizens in all communities and in the unincorporated County areas.

3] The proposed City staff Homeless Coordinator and the proposed multidisciplinary committee, with City Council and other political support, should have responsibility for creating and carrying out a viable funding plan (per # 2] above), initially just for the shelter program recommended in this Report. As other portions of this Report are readied for implementation, the Coordinator and Committee also may be asked to be involved in designing and securing funding for those programs.

9. CONCLUSION: THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED HEREIN SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN A COHERENT ORDER, WITH A FIRM TIMELINE, SO AS TO EFFECTIVELY CREATE THE INTEGRATED SYSTEM NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS.

Recommended Actions

The Task Force went through a cumulative research, study, discussion and decision process which built one recommended action on another in order to create a multifaceted, w holistic solution which lends itself to logical, phased implementation. Accordingly, the following Table is provided, which shows the number of the Recommended Action (keyed to the Conclusion numbers in this Report), followed by a brief description of the Action, then a proposed implementation date, and finally an estimated cost.

The Task Force notes that the costs shown here are ROUGH ESTIMATES only, as the Recommended Actions will require fine-tuning, and their scope will require adjustment in accordance with the potential availability of funding.

It is hoped that this Table will serve to summarize and simplify -- but not substitute for a full reading of -- the Task Force's vision of an innovative, integrated program of services leading to a decrease in homelessness in the City of Mesa.

#	Recommended Actions	Implementation Date	Estimated Cost
1.1-2	Take a strong policy stand regarding homelessness.	immediately	no direct cost
2.A-B	Adopt responsibilities for homeless people and the community (policy).	immediately	no direct cost
5.1-4	Adopt modifications to the Council Use Permit process	immediately	no direct cost
3.A-1	Create homeless outreach team to work with people on streets/in shelter.	FY 1996-97	\$80-90,000 annually
3.B-2 3.B-3 3.B-4	Persistent, consistent police encouragement to keep moving. Pursue changes in laws where necessary.	FY 1996-97	no direct cost
7.1	Create a multidisciplinary committee to deal with homeless issues.	FY 1996-97	no direct cost (staff would be Homeless Coordinator)
7.3	Hire a City Homeless Coordinator	FY 1996-97	\$50,000 annually (plus startup costs)
6.1-5	Implement a major marketing program to educate the community about homelessness.	FY 1996-97	\$100,000 annually (includes printing, advertising, graphics, special events, etc)
8.1-2	Solicit support for shelter program.	immediately, ongoing	no direct cost
4.1-4 3.A-2 3.A-3 7.4	Create/operate a shelter for single adults. NOTE: Full costs are shown, but it is anticipated that others besides the City of Mesa will participate. Shelter operation including a mental health outreach worker stationed at the shelter.	FY 1996-97 (design and land acquisition) FY 1997-98 (site improvements, construction or renovation) FY 1998-99 and ongoing (operation)	\$138,750 \$431,250 \$500,000 annually
7.2	Create a database to track homeless persons receiving assistance.	FY 1996-97	\$50,000 annually

